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spect also to the author's Median Alphabet, as given in the same paper, he now makes a few slight corrections, which, however, do not affect the general views there stated regarding that language. Dr. Hincks further gives a Babylonian alphabet or syllabary, exhibiting the values of sixty-five characters of the third Persepolitan writing, and of one hundred and twenty-eight of the Babylonian lapidary characters : placing the Babylonian characters in juxtaposition with the corresponding Persepolitan ones. He adds an analysis of fourteen proper names written in the latter character, and of two in the former ; and he points out the mode of reading them in the different forms under which they appear in the inscriptions. Dr. Hincks moreover states, that, with the exception of a few letters, to which correct values had been assigned by Professor Grotefend, and a few others to which the same author had approximated, nothing in the right direction had hitherto been published concerning these two last-mentioned kinds of writing.

The Rev. Charles Graves read a paper on the date of the manuscript commonly called the Book of Armagh.*

Shortly after the Book of Armagh had been deposited in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, Mr. Graves observed, on a careful examination, that numerous erasures had been made in it. These occur at the end of the following writings contained in the volume :

1. The Confession of St. Patrick, fol. 24, *b*.
2. The Gospel of St. Matthew, fol. 52, *b*.
3. The Gospel of St. Mark, fol. 67, *b*.
4. The Gospel of St. Luke, fol. 89, *b*.
5. The Revelation of St. John, fol. 170, *a*.
6. The Acts of the Apostles, fol. 190, *a*.
7. The second Book of the Life of St. Martin of Tours, fol. 214, *a*.
8. A letter of Sulpicius Severus, fol. 220, *a*.

* For an account of this manuscript see Transactions, vol. xx. p. 329.

So effectually had the original writing been effaced in these places, that, in the first instance, Mr. Graves gave up the attempt to decipher it as utterly hopeless. But his attention was again urgently drawn to the subject by Mr. Eugene Curry, who had independently noticed the same fact. Being aware that it was usual for Irish scribes to insert, at the end of books written by them, their own names, and some notices of the date or occasion of the writing, he had been looking at these very places in the hope of finding such entries, and, to his disappointment, he had ascertained that they had been erased. Still he did not despair of their being ultimately read : and as he thought it probable that, like the body of the work, they were written in Latin, a language with which he is not well acquainted, he requested Mr. Graves to endeavour to make them out. One of the erasures to which he particularly directed attention was the one marked 7 in the list given above, and to this Mr. Graves first applied himself. He reads it as follows :

Pro Ferdornacho ores.

A well-executed fac simile is subjoined, for the purpose of enabling those who have access to the manuscript to judge whether his reading be correct.

Pro Ferdornacho ores

On turning to erasures 3, 4, and 8, he satisfied himself that the same words had been written in those places also. It is thus established that the whole volume was executed by the same scribe, as, indeed, the uniformity of the handwriting sufficiently proves. Erasures 6 and 7 are considerable ones ; and there is good reason to apprehend that, in both these instances, we have to deplore the loss of much information respecting the manuscript.

At all events, we know that it was written by a scribe named Ferdornach. But it yet remains to be ascertained who this Ferdornach was, and at what time he lived.

The Annals of the Four Masters contain entries respecting two persons of this name, both of them scribes.

A. C. 726. Férdomnach rǵrīb-
nsoir Aṛṣa Maṁa d'ecc.

A. C. 844. Fēarḃomnach eag-
naíde 7 rǵrībnoḃ toḡaíde do
muintir Aṛṣa Maṁa d'ecc.

A. D. 727. Ferdornach, Scribe
of Armagh, died.

A. D. 845. Ferdornach, a sage
and choice scribe of the church
of Armagh, died.

The fact that both these persons were scribes of Armagh, where this manuscript was preserved for so many centuries, renders it in the highest degree probable that one or other was the writer. The names of between thirty and forty persons, who held the office of *Scriba* or *Scholasticus* in Armagh, are enumerated in the Annals of that see, given by Colgan in his *Trias Thaumaturga*. But of all these there were only two Ferdornachs, the two already mentioned.

Assuming, then, as it seems safe to do, that one or other of these persons was the scribe of the manuscript, Mr. Graves proceeds to fix the actual year in which it was written. He thinks that he has effected this by partly deciphering the writing in the erasure No. 2. This erasure consists of four short lines; and the original writing was in a semi-Greek character, the nature of which is exhibited in the following passages, containing nearly all the letters of the Roman alphabet. The first is one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, as given in St. Matthew's Gospel, fol. 36, *a*. The second is a memorandum occurring in the very column at the foot of which is the erasure under consideration.

ΠΑΝΕ
μoστρyoc· cōτιδιανyoc· da
nobis· hodie·

ΕΞΠΛΗΚΤ· ΑΕΥΑΓΓΕ
ΛΙΟΝ· ΚΑΤΑ· ΜΑΤ
ΤΗΥΝ· ΣΤΟΡΙΠΤΥΝ·
ΑΤ· ΕΥΕ· ΦΙΝΙΤΥΝ·
ΙΝ ΦΗΡΙΑ· ΜΑΤΤΗΙ·

PANEM
NOSTRUM · COTIDIANUM · DA
NOBIS · HODIE ·

EXPLICIT · AEVANGVE
LION · KATA · MAT
TEVM · SCRIPTVM ·
ATQVE FINITVM ·
IN FERIA · MATTEI ·

After the latter passage comes a Collect appropriate to the Festival of St. Matthew, and then, at the bottom of the page, is the erasure.

By the use of a weak solution of gallic acid in spirits of wine, Mr. Graves revived the traces of the original writing a good deal; and, aided by a magnifying glass, he succeeded, at the expense of much time and labour, in deciphering the greater part of the erased writing. The following fac simile exhibits as much as can be read with any certainty :

2kt hmk '
 + 21 23akt. fHpHΔH πdt
 p'ctii. ctpitcIT —

Now, as the Heres Patricii undoubtedly meant the successor of St. Patrick in the see of Armagh, we at once gain this additional and positive information, that the scribe who wrote the book was contemporary with some Archbishop of Armagh whose name ended with *ach* : and this cannot be said of the earlier Ferdornach, who died A. D. 727. It appears, from a passage in fol. 18, *b*, that Flann Febla had attained the primacy before this book was written, and he was succeeded by Suibne, who outlived this Ferdornach. Nay, more, if we may trust the list of the Archbishops of Armagh contained in the *Leabhar Breac*, fol. 99, *b*, or that given by Colgan from the Psalter of Cashel, there had been no Archbishop of Armagh, whose name terminated thus, for more than a hundred years previous to the death of the first Ferdornach. On the other hand, we know that, in the time of the second Ferdornach, there were three Archbishops of Armagh whose names ended in *ach*, Foendelach, Connmach, and Torbach. But further, enough remains of the letter preceding the final *ach* to indicate that it was a *b*, certainly enough to show that it could not have been either an *l* or an *m*. Moreover, in the space

occupied by the name, there is not room for more than seven or eight letters. On these grounds Mr. Graves concludes that the name was that of Torbach, whose death is thus recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters :

A. C. 807. *Ṭorbach mac Ṭor-
main Scríbnór, Leḡtór, ⁊
abb Ára Máca epíde, do
cénel Ṭorbairḡ, eaðon, O
Ceallairḡ Ḍneairḡ.*

A. D. 808. Torbach, son of Gorman, Scribe, Lecturer, and Abbot of Armagh was he, of the Kinel Torbaigh, i. e. of Hy-Kelly of Bregia.

Introducing then the name of Torbach, Mr. Graves proposes to restore the whole passage thus :

F DOMNACH · HVNC · LIB
E RVM · E DICTANTE
R TORBACH · HEREDE · PAT
RICII · SCRIPSIT

Torbach held the primacy, according to the catalogues of the Psalter of Cashel and the *Leabhar Breac*, for a single year; and his death took place on the 16th of July ; “ *colitur 16^o Julii*,” says Colgan, T. T. p. 294. Since, then, the writing of the Gospel of St. Matthew in the Book of Armagh was finished on St. Matthew’s festival day, the 21st of September, and during Torbach’s primacy, it must have been in the year 807.

If we could be quite sure that the half-erased name terminated in *bach*, there would remain no reasonable ground for doubting the conclusion at which Mr. Graves has arrived. For the satisfaction, however, of those who may not participate in the certainty which he feels as regards this point, he thinks it right to notice the following circumstances, which, although not deserving the name of proofs, tend in some degree to confirm the probability of his conjecture.

The Torbach abovementioned having been himself a scribe of Armagh, the copying of the precious manuscripts of the

see was such a work as we might expect to find undertaken during his primacy : and of the second Ferdomnach we are informed, not only that he was a scribe of Armagh in Torbach's time, but that he was *repeibnib togaride*, a choice scribe, a fit person to be intrusted with so important a work. Certainly the penmanship of the Book of Armagh is of the most consummate excellence. The whole of the writing is remarkable for its distinctness and uniformity. All the letters are elegantly shaped, and many of the initials are executed with great artistic skill. The last verses of St. John's Gospel, fol. 103 *a*, may be especially referred to, as exhibiting a specimen of penmanship which no scrivener of the present day could attempt to rival.

It is also worthy of notice, that, about the time of Torbach's primacy, the inroads of the Danes in the north of Ireland, and the adjoining islands, were becoming so frequent and serious, that the ecclesiastics of Armagh might well have been anxious to take measures for the preservation of their records. In the year 802 the Scandinavian pirates plundered the monastery of Hy, on which occasion many of the inmates, both laymen and monks, perished. They again attacked it in 806, and put to death no less than sixty-eight of the monks. In 807 they effected a landing on the Irish coast, and, penetrating as far as Roscommon, destroyed it, and laid waste the surrounding country. But it was not till 831 that they entered Armagh. In that year, as we learn from the Annals of the Four Masters, they plundered it three times in the course of one month. It had never before been taken possession of by foreigners.

Mr. Graves stated that, on mentioning to his friend Mr. Petrie the fact of his having ascertained the name of the scribe of the Book of Armagh to be Ferdomnach, Mr. Petrie at once informed him, that he had, many years ago, made a drawing of a tombstone at Clonmacnoise, on which that name ap-

peared. By his kind permission Mr. Graves is enabled to lay the following outline of it before the Academy :

The character of the inscription, and the style of the cross, belong, as Mr. Petrie thinks, to the ninth century. It is not unlikely that this may be the tombstone of the very person by whom the Book of Armagh was transcribed. His having been buried at Clonmacnoise rather than at Armagh, furnishes no argument to the contrary. We know that many distinguished ecclesiastics and learned men came from remote places to pass their last days as pilgrims at Clonmacnoise. It might be that Ferdomnach retired to that place when Armagh was plundered by the Danes in 831.

It is not a little remarkable, that the Book of Lecan, in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, furnishes us with the

pedigree of a Ferdomnach, twenty-third in descent from Connary More, Monarch of Ireland, whose reign commenced A. D. 158. Allowing thirty years to a generation, we should bring the time of this Ferdomnach just down to the middle of the ninth century. For the discovery of this curious coincidence Mr. Graves is indebted to Mr. Eugene Curry, who, at his request, most kindly undertook the laborious task of making the necessary searches.

Sir William Betham, in his account of this manuscript,* has assigned to it an earlier date, assuming it to have been written by Aidus, Bishop of Sletty, who died A. D. 699. And in this he has been followed by Mr. Westwood, in his recently published *Palæographia Sacra*. Sir William Betham, wanting the positive evidences now brought forward, appears to have been led to that conclusion by a passage in the Life of St. Patrick, fol. 20, b: “*Hæc pauca de Sancti Patricii peritia et virtutibus Muirchu Macc u Machzheni dictante Aiduo Slebtiensis civitatis episcopo conscripsit.*” But it would seem that these words were only intended to convey that the memoir of St. Patrick was originally drawn up at the desire or command of Aidus, just as the Gospel of St. Matthew, and probably the whole Book of Armagh, was transcribed by Ferdomnach *dictante herede Patricii*, at the bidding of the then Archbishop of Armagh.

The original Life of St. Patrick, by Muirchu, together with the annotations of Tirechan, were evidently becoming illegible at the time that Ferdomnach's copy of them was made. This is sufficiently indicated by notes in the margin, which show that the scribe found it difficult, in many places, to read the manuscript from which he was transcribing. Whatever abatement, therefore, has been made from the supposed age of the Book of Armagh, is fully compensated for by the knowledge that it is a copy from documents which were themselves old in the year 807.

* Irish Antiquarian Researches, vol. i. pp. 257, 270.

It is not easy to conjecture at what time the erasures now noticed were made in the manuscript. They seem not only to have concealed the name of the scribe from those scholars through whose hands the manuscript has passed at different times, but to have escaped their observation. At all events, they are not mentioned by those antiquaries who have hitherto published descriptions of the Book of Armagh. It is hardly possible to conceive how so intelligent a scholar as Lhwyd could have spoken as he does of the commonly received belief, that it was in the handwriting of St. Patrick, if the name of the real scribe, Ferdomnach, had appeared in eight or more places. And if he had not himself observed the signature of the real scribe, it could scarcely have passed unnoticed by Mr. Arthur Brownlow, who, on purchasing the book, after it had been left in pledge for £5 by Florentine Mac Moyre, carefully arranged and numbered the folios, and marked in the margin the beginnings of the chapters of the several books of the New Testament, a task, in the execution of which he must necessarily have examined every single page of the book. On these grounds Mr. Graves is inclined to believe, that the erasures were made before the manuscript came into the possession of Mr. Brownlow, that is to say, about the year 1680.

DONATIONS.

1. *Dictionary of the Roots of the Latin, according to the Method of A. F. Yazvenskago.* Presented by the Author.
2. *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.* New Series. Vol. II. Presented by the Academy.
3. *Natuurkundige Verhandelingen van de Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen te Haarlem.* 2e Verzameling. 3e Deel. 1e Stuk. Presented by the Society.